

**Administration by BCS**

c/o 3 Newbridge Square, Swindon SN1 1BY

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**COUNCIL OF PROFESSORS AND HEADS OF COMPUTING**

Minutes of the Committee meeting of the Council of Professors and Heads of Computing held on **Tuesday 5 October 2021** as an online meeting

**PRESENT**

Edmund Robinson (Chair)	Rob Aspin	Steven Bradley
James Davenport	Ray Farmer	Sally Fincher
Atif Waraich	Jessica Phillips (EPSRC)	Iain Phillips (BCS Academy Board)

**IN ATTENDANCE (Secretariat)**

Maxine Leslie (BCS)	Ruth Lehane (BCS)
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**INVITED (Items 1-4 only)**

Alastair Irons	Bill Mitchell
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**APOLOGIES**

James Dracott (EPSRC)	Paul Sant	Mark Griffiths
m.c. schraefel		

**1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chair welcomed R Lehane to the meeting, who is working in the BCS Boards and Committees team supporting these activities. Formal apologies were received from J Dracott (EPSRC) and the Chair noted that Nick Savage has stepped down from the Committee and his role as Vice Chair, following his move from academia to industry. The Chair recorded his thanks for the considerable work Nick has undertaken for CPHC and for the Committee.

**2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING (CPHC/2021/19)**

The minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday 29 June 2021, including the record of the joint CPHC/UKCRC meeting, were accepted as a true record. The Chair noted that Jane Hillston is stepping down as UKCRC Chair soon, but a replacement has not yet been announced.

**3. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Matters arising, not covered elsewhere on the agenda were as follows.

**29 June 2021**

Matter's arising – (item 3) Chair's report (Item 5.1): for the appointment of a new Distinguished Dissertation Committee Chair, E Robinson undertook to meet with Alastair Irons to finalise this in the next 2 weeks. See also [item 6.10](#) below.

**4. BCS ACADEMIC ACCREDITATION [Guests: A Irons/B Mitchell]**

Alastair Irons and Bill Mitchell had been invited to provide Committee members with an update on the academic accreditation review and the wider context of the Engineering

Council's newly published [Accreditation of HE Programmes 4](#). A Irons reported that there have been a number of challenges including:

1. Streamlining the process – to make it more straightforward, removing duplication whilst ensuring it is still robust. This has been and will be on-going.
2. CITP/CEng parts of accreditation – CITP is intended to complement CEng but now there is confusion about what each registration is and what institutions should apply for.
3. Importance of consistency – this is needed between visit panels.
4. Changes in the environment – the updating to the AHEP4 guidance presents another challenge; however, it is easier to interpret than AHEP3. The QAA benchmark is due to be published at the end of the year. In this wider context, it is crucial to make sure whole accreditation process is valuable to institutions, prospective employers and students. BCS accreditation is also recognised by EQANIE, the Seoul Accord and (through the Engineering Council) the Washington Accord.

Recommendations were provided to the BCS Exec team at the end of July 2021. The response was that accreditation should be seen as key product with a new product manager appointed to report to a single owner within BCS. The Steering Group has now been dissolved and work is now underway with AAC and other parts of BCS to operationalise and embed AHEP4. One of the planned outcomes is to make it clear what accredited degree graduates can do for employers and enable the public to appreciate what professionals can do. It is important for the whole community to work together to make it work and it would help a great deal for CPHC to get involved in the review and subsequent promotion and the operation (eg, becoming accreditors). The emphasis is to undertake this with stakeholders (HEIs, students employers) not imposing change on them without consultation.

Members provided the following feedback:

- What is it for, why is BCS doing it? (AI/BM replied that if BCS didn't, the IET would move into this area)
- 'Accreditation' is a misnomer and is therefore confusing as Degree Apprenticeships are also 'accredited' in a different way, and also NCSC for which there are different processes and criteria.
- The importance of incorporating professionalism and assisting with mentoring for students by industry and teachers.
- Is accreditation still satisfying CITP rather than competence? (AI replied yes, although looking at SFIA to amplify the accreditation process)
- There is an issue as to whether industry wants it, experience is that when talking to employers they don't care, they don't even require a degree so to some extent it is like the wild west in that they grab what they can. (AI replied that the review team is talking to employers through one group. Component parts need to fit together with accreditation concerned with CITP. Many people look at digital jobs which are not necessarily related to CS programmes and this is a bigger piece that needs to be looked at. It is important to get the accreditation piece right for our own discipline)
- This is what we have been doing for many years and it's not working. (BM replied that DCMS has surveyed a significant number of employers who emphasise the importance of recruiting graduates with the right professional skills. If BCS is the professional body, then it should be interested in what employers think. Accreditation causes a lot of angst and BCS loses money on what it does, but it is useful to get one single thing that BCS should care about, which is professionalism. The hard part is to explain to 18 year old students about professionalism as they only start thinking about it in their final year. The SFIA link is important, accreditation is not sticky tape but the core to how students can be supported to get professionalism in their degree to get a good job and contribute)
- It is important to focus on general professional behaviour rather than technical knowledge and skills.
- Professionalism starts here and that part of accreditation is welcomed. One of the challenges is for staff to model appropriate professional models and attitudes but they

are still a long way from industry. It would be great to get more support from BCS on getting staff and students out into industry. (AI replied that the RAEng do this, but it is not something that BCS is looking at yet as there is no budget for it, but it is worth exploring and happy to pick it up outside this meeting with R Aspin.) Also it changes the conversation with students as it becomes a more mentoring conversation. S Fincher noted that there are lots of models in the [CPHC report](#).

- Assessment could include how much relevant industrial experience there is.
- It is important for institutions to get better engagement with industry, which starts to solve earlier comments about employer recognition. Employing good CS lecturers is very difficult, but one of the solutions is to talk to industry to take advantage of their expertise.
- Good to talk to students and parents about why they would value accreditation, need to continue conversations with students all the way through. Don't mention it when applying for jobs. (AI agreed, noting that Holly Porter (BCS Membership Director) was looking at how to engage students before university and keep them engaged throughout.
- In the Shadbolt focus groups, group projects were cited as being important to employers, but these are unpopular with students according to the NSS. Institutions would drop group projects if it wasn't for accreditation, but employers are not aware of this.
- Need a simple story that is stuck to that people engage with. Accreditation is about professionalism, rather than technical as this is too complex to explain. (BM replied yes, the marketing team is involved in this and it is therefore important that the accreditation product is managed across BCS)
- Free academic membership would make it attractive, if priced then struggle with what the gain is that you can't get yourself. Clarity issue too, membership could be rolled into accreditation activity as an add on.

A Irons and B Mitchell thanked Members for the opportunity to discuss this area. Next is Phase 2 and then phase 3, but it does not end as it is continuously evolving.

*A Irons/B Mitchell left the meeting*

## **5. EPSRC Update**

J Phillips reported that round 5 of the Prosperity Partnerships call is now open and EPSRC would be grateful if members could let contacts know about it to increase engagement. The Spending Review is still on-going, with many government departments involved. Recruitment is underway for the EPSRC Science, Engineering and Technology Board, as circulated to the CPHC members list (see [EPSRC website](#)).

The Chair asked whether the report on the review of Doctoral Training would be published soon. J Phillips replied that the report had been published on 7 October and there were several recommendations on 3 key areas. The Chair also asked if there was a 2 year settlement for UKRI in the Spending Review, J Phillips did not believe this to be the case. It is hoped that more information will be available for the next UKCRC Executive Committee meeting on 26 October. An EPSRC/UKRI report was circulated to CPHC Members following the meeting.

*J Phillips joined the meeting at this point*

## **6. REGULAR REPORTS**

- ### **6.1 Chair's Communications**
- Further to Nick Savage's resignation from CPHC due to his appointment to a new role in industry, the Chair undertook to liaise with A Waraich on finding a replacement Vice Chair (to also take up a vacant Trustee role).

**ACTION: Chair/A Waraich**

Members discussed the logistics of the high volume of new undergraduate student entrants, including space for hybrid teaching delivery, assessment, accommodation and meals and long term sustainability.

It was noted that the Institute of Coding was entering a 'legacy period' and it is not clear how the community will move forward in future. There are good intentions and good will within DfE and the Office for AI, but not a huge amount of money for the future.

- 6.2 Treasurer's Report** – R Farmer reported that there is a total current fund £103k compared to this time last year when it was £88K.

Members gave consent for the final accounts to be circulated to CPHC members with the draft AGM minutes *[action complete]*.

- 6.3 Learning Development Group Report** – No report.

- 6.4 Secretary's Report** – As noted above, A Waraich reported that a new Vice Chair needs to be appointed, following N Savage's resignation. The proposal made by I Phillips, that volunteers be co-opted to the Committee until formal elections can take place next year, was felt to be a good way forward. The Chair and Secretary undertook to liaise on this offline and circulate the next step to the Committee, following which the Secretary can contact volunteers as soon as possible. **ACTION: Chair/A Waraich**

- 6.5 UKCRC Report** – no report.

- 6.6 EPC Report** – no report.

- 6.7 Welsh HoS** – no report as M Griffiths was not in attendance.

- 6.8 NI HoS** – no report (currently no representative).

- 6.9 Scottish HoS** – no report (currently no representative).

- 6.10 Reports from Other Organisations & Activities (IE/PICTFOR; Distinguished dissertations; IoC; DisDis)** – the Chair reiterated that he and Alastair Irons would be meeting to plan the DisDis Chair position shortly. **ACTION: Chair/(A Irons)**

## **7. SUBSCRIPTIONS UPDATE**

Members RECEIVED and NOTED the report.

[main items of business]

## **8. PROGRAMME of WORK**

- 8.1 Planning for the year** – no report.

- 8.2 2022 Further Conference events** – R Aspin suggested that the preferred format for next year's conference is face-to-face, probably in the south of the UK in April 2022. In addition to the format, the key questions are the agenda and support for its organisation, ie, who to support R Aspin on a Conference Working Group.

Members agreed this approach and that contingency measures for an alternative format should be put in place in case they are required.

The University of Bath had been suggested in the past as a possible venue, however, J Davenport was not present during this item due to connectivity problems. R Aspin undertook to liaise with J Davenport and circulate a proposal to the Committee in the next couple of weeks. **ACTION: R Aspin**

### 8.3 Workshop Programme:

**LDG [TBA]/Pipeline [TBA]/EDI Seminar Series inc embedding EDI master class [m.c. schraefel]/Outreach Network [S Fincher] –**

**LDG:** S Fincher reported that the LDG had received 15 expressions of interest from a range of different types of institution before the September deadline, with total bids worth £67,695. The bids were of variable quality, with a few not getting the calibration right in terms of fundamental research and one department making three independent submissions, which is not permitted. The next stage is for the Panel (S Fincher, S Bradley and E Robinson) to provide feedback to those that have submitted and, if unsuccessful, give them a chance to re-apply.

It was expected that the total award this time would be £20-30k. This was thought to be a really good use of the surplus and members discussed how this offer can be sustained in future when the surplus is not as healthy as it is now. It may be that total awards will be lower per cycle, but care will be needed to ensure that the expenditure on this activity is proportionate, especially taking into account possible re-submissions, maybe aiming for about £20k per year beyond the operating surplus. It will be important to recognise this and manage expectations.

Alternative options are to secure industrial sponsorship or matched funding for special project grants. R Aspin noted that it takes time to build partnerships for sponsorships, so it will be important to start early, but these can be long term.

**Pipeline:** S Fincher indicated that N Savage had been responsible for this area, but often it has been others that have run the workshops, such as (ex) colleagues at the University of Kent. The question is do we actually want to continue with these following Nick's departure, ie is there anyone willing to take this on? The Chair noted that this was appreciated by many. A Waraich had been involved in delivering the New Heads workshop at the conference, and was happy to continue this with the support of another member. R Aspin is also keen to get involved. The Chair would like to offer at least another round of coffee table for HoDs/DoRs/DoTs for later on this semester.

**Outreach network:** S Fincher hoped that members have received the Outreach report, hard copies of which have been circulated to all CPHC member HoDs. Faron Moller has suggested a reboot launch event at Swansea University on 8 March 2022, asking members if this would be a good event to hold, dovetailing with International Women's Day. S Fincher undertook to work up a proposal for this for Committee members to consider online.

**ACTION: S Fincher**

## 9. MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS – October, November, December 2021

October – Special Project Grants (S Fincher)

## 10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

### 10.1 Reading uni – resignation

From the circulated email, it appeared that the membership subscription payment was being postponed rather than cancelled. It was queried whether any Committee members know Lily Sun to approach to query this. The subscription was £170 and if the institution temporarily resigns, it means that all of the staff will be removed from the mailing list. The Chair undertook to contact the institution to check their intentions.

**ACTION: Chair**

**10.2** Keith Miller had asked R Aspin to liaise with Committee members on a query he had received. The Royal Institution (Ri) CS network has asked to get involved in secondary school talks and to date only Cambridge has got involved. The query was whether there is anything that CPHC can do to engage with this. There has been no feedback from

CPHC to the Ri as yet, but it was agreed that such engagement would raise CPHC's profile with the Ri. The Chair indicated that his institution was involved (Paulo Oliva, Outreach contact at QMUL). S Fincher suggested inviting Ri to the Outreach report launch. S Bradley proposed that the Ri contact be invited to a future CPHC Committee meeting to talk about this and R Aspin undertook to send them a copy of the Outreach Report and invite them to the next meeting.

**ACTION: R Aspin**

The Chair thanked members and closed the meeting at 13:02.

## Outstanding Actions from Committee Meetings – 5 October 2021, 29 June 2021, 13 May 2021 & 1 February 2021

OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM COMMITTEE MEETING – 5 OCTOBER 2021				
REGULAR REPORTS Chair's report	6.1	Liaise on finding a replacement Vice Chair (to also take up a Trustee role)	Chair/ A Waraich	On-going
Secretary's report	6.4	Liaise to arrange co-opting of volunteers to Committee prior to the formal election process at the 2022 AGM, consult Committee and follow up with volunteers	Chair/ A Waraich	On-going
Reports from other organisations	6.10	Meet with A Irons to plan the DisDis Chair position	Chair/ (A Irons)	On-going
PROGRAMME OF WORK 2022 Conference	8.2	Liaise and circulate a 2022 conference proposal to the Committee in the next couple of weeks	R Aspin/J Davenport	On-going
Workshop programme: Outreach Network	8.3	Work up a proposal for a reboot launch event at Swansea University on 8 March 2022, for Committee to consider online	S Fincher	On-going
ANY OTHER BUSINESS Reading uni - resignation	10.1	Contact University of Reading to check their intentions considering that resignation will lead to removal from the list	Chair	On-going
	10.2	Send Royal Institution contact a copy of the Outreach report and invite to the December meeting	R Aspin	On-going
OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM COMMITTEE MEETING – 29 JUNE 2021				
MATTERS ARISING 13 May 2021 Chair's report (5.1)	3	Members interested, or knowing someone who might be interested, in getting involved in the DisDis Committee to contact E Robinson or Alastair Irons	Members	On-going
REGULAR REPORTS Secretary's report	5.4	Liaise on co-opting members to Committee for Scotland and NI and others with a view to trialling to potentially fill vacancies at April 2022 AGM	Chair/ A Waraich	On-going
OUTSTANDING SUBSCRIPTIONS	6	Forward outstanding 2020/21 subscriptions to R Farmer for chasing	M Leslie/ R Farmer	On-going
ANY OTHER BUSINESS	11	Investigate how the Committee might set up a system to regularly nominate members of the community for UK Honours	Chair	On-going
OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM COMMITTEE MEETING – 13 MAY 2021				
MATTERS ARISING 1 Feb 2021 Treasurer's report (5.2)	3	Forward the LJMU project report to the Committee and ask project manager to share standards of practice with Members	A Waraich	On-going
9 Dec 2020 MEMBER COMMS (10)		Contact Anne Nortcliffe (Canterbury Christchurch) about interesting data about whether secondary school students are able to learn CS in particular areas	Chair	On-going

<b>REGULAR REPORTS</b>	5.1	Circulate information on BCS Academy/Alan Hayes mentoring scheme	J H Davenport	On-going
<b>PURPOSE &amp; VISION STATEMENT – ANNUAL REVIEW</b>	10	Review statement	Chair	On-going
<b>OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM COMMITTEE MEETING – 1 FEBRUARY 2021</b>				
<b>REGULAR REPORTS Chair's communications</b>	5.1	Draw up a specification for a CPHC-funded diversity in CS project to help the community with curriculum, recruitment and retention through site visits	m.c. schraefel/ Chair	On-going
<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>	10.2	Work on a privacy notice for the website with the Chair, A Waraich and J Davenport	M Leslie	On-going

## FUTURE MEETINGS

*All online and commencing at 11.00am, unless otherwise stated*

<b>COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2021</b>	<b>CONFERENCE DATES</b>
Wednesday 8 December 2021	To be confirmed
<b>COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2022<sup>#</sup></b>	
Monday 7 February 2022	
Thursday 12 May 2022	
Monday 4 July 2022	
*Tuesday 25 October 2022 (1.30-4.30pm)	
Wednesday 7 December 2022	

*\*to be co-located with UKCRC Executive Committee meeting if possible*

*NB: F2F/online format TBC; BCS London rooms subject to availability on these dates*